

Message Text

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TAGS: ELAB, SGEN, EEC

SUBJECT: ETUC EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MEETING, MAY 4

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1. BEGIN SUMMARY. THE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE OF THE EUROPEAN TRADE UNION CONFEDERATION (ETUC) MET IN BRUSSELS MAY 4 AND DECIDED TO SET UP A SMALL COMMITTEE TO NEGOTIATE AFFILIATION ISSUES WITH A COUNTERPART COMMITTEE OF THE EUROPEAN ORGANIZATION OF THE WORLD CONFEDERATION OF LABOR (E9- WCL). THE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE REJECTED AN ISRAELI REQUEST FOR OBSERVER STATUS AT COMMITTEE MEETINGS; FAILED TO AGREE ON THE MODALITIES OF ITS RELATIONS WITH EUROPEAN TRADE SECRETARIATS; AND DECIDED TO REVISE DRASTICALLY PROPOSALS FOR A SOCIAL POLICY PROGRAM PREPARED BY ITS SECRETARIAT FOR PRESENTATION TO THE EUROPEAN COMMUNITY (EC). END SUMMARY.

2. NEGOTIATIONS WITH THE EO- WCL. THE ETUC EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE DISCUSSED A REQUEST FROM THE EO- WCL CONCERNING FUTURE AFFILIATION OF ITS OWN MEMBERS TO THE ETUC. WHILE ACCEPTING THE FACT THAT EACH OF ITS OWN AFFILIATES WOULD HAVE TO JOIN THE ETUC INDIVIDUALLY, THE EO- WCL SOUGHT AGREEMENT ON THE GENERAL TERMS OF SUCH AFFILIATION AND LAID DOWN CERTAIN SPECIFIC DEMANDS, INCLUDING THAT ONE ETUC VICE PRESIDENT AND A DEPTY GENERAL SECRETARY COME FROM EO- WCL AFFILIATES. THE ETUC EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE AGREED TO SET UP A COMMITTEE, WHICH WILL INCLUDE BRITISH, GERMAN, FRENCH, BELGIAN AND SCANDINAVIAN REPRESENTATIVES, TO NEGOTIATE THE MODALITIES OF AFFILIATION WITH THE EO- WCL. HOWEVER, IT MADE CLEAR THAT ONLY THE ETUC CONGRESS COULD DECIDE WHETHER TOP POSITIONS SHOULD BE SET ASIDE FOR THE EO- WCL.

3. THE ETUC EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE ALSO DELINEATED A NUMBER OF PROBLEMS WHICH WOULD HAVE TO BE RESOLVED DURING NEGOTIATIONS, INCLUDING WHETHER THE WCL WOULD MAINTAIN A REGIONAL ORGANIZATION IN EUROPE EVEN AFTER ITS EUROPEAN AFFILIATES HAD ENTERED THE ETUC. WHILE THESE AND OTHER ISSUES WOULD HAVE TO BE HAMMURED OUT DURING FUTURE NEGOTIATIONS, IT BECAME CLEAR FROM THE DISCUSSION AT THE ETUC COMMITTEE MEETING THAT SEVERAL ETUC LEADERS (PARTICULARLY DEBUNNE, BERGERON AND VETTER) HAVE STRONG, IF VARIED, REASONS FOR MOVING SLOWLY AND CAUTIOUSLY ON AFFILIATION OF EO- WCL TRADE UNION CENTERS.

4. REJECTION OF HISTADRUT REQUEST FOR OBSERVER STATUS. THE COMMITTEE REJECTED A REQUEST BY HISTADRUT OF ISRAEL LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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FOR OBSERVER STATUS AT ITS EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MEETINGS. IT AGREED, HOWEVER, THAT HISTADRUT SHOULD CONTINUE TO ENJOY SUCH STATUS FOR CONGRESS MEETINGS, AT SEMINARS, INSTITUTES AND SIMILAR FUNCTIONS, AND THAT ITS SECRETARIAT SHOULD WORK OUT WITH HISTADRUT REPRESENTATIVES CLOSER, INFORMAL LIAISON ON ETUC ACTIVITIES. ACCORDING TO A SOURCE PRESENT AT THE ETUC COMMITTEE MEETING, SEVERAL

MEMBERS WERE CONCERNED THAT IF HISTADRUT WERE TO RECEIVE A PRIVILEGED STATUS, IT WOULD CREATE A VARIETY OF SIMILAR DEMANDS FROM OTHER TRADE UNION CENTERS, INCLUDING THE TURKS, THE SPANISH (IN EXILE) AND EVEN SOME FROM ARAB COUNTRIES.

5. RELATIONS WITH THE TRADE SECRETARIATS. THE ETUC FAILED TO REACH A DECISION ON RULES GOVERNING ITS RELATIONS WITH THE TRADE SECRETARIATS (EUROPEAN ORGANIZATIONS BASED ON INDUSTRIES OR TRADES). DESPITE A STRONG EFFORT BY GUNTHER KOPKE, GENERAL SECRETARY OF THE EUROPEAN METALWORKERS FEDERATION (EMF), TO SECURE SUCH A DECISION FROM THE ETUC EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE, MANY MEMBERS FEEL THAT THE PROBLEMS INVOLVED ARE TOO COMPLEX FOR EARLY RESOLUTION. ACCORDING TO OUR SOURCE, A NUMBER OF THE WORLD- LEVEL INTERNATIONAL TRADE SECRETARIATS (ITS) ARE NOT YET PREPARED TO SEE THEIR AFFILIATES OBTAIN GREATER AUTONOMY AND POWER ON THE EUROPEAN LEVEL. ALTHOUGH THE DGB' S VETTER MADE IT CLEAR THAT IT WOULD BE IMPOSSIBLE FOR THE ETUC TOMAKE A VIABLE POLICY WITHOUT THESE EUROPEAN ITS' S, THE BRITISH, WHO ARE LUKEWARM ABOUT HAVING STRONG EUROPEAN- BASED ITS' S, URGED DELAY.

6. EC SOCIAL ACTION PROGRAM. THE ETUC HAS ATTEMPTED TO FORMULATE PROPOSALS FOR A BROAD SOCIAL POLICY PROGRAM FOR PRESENTATION TO THE EUROPEAN COMMUNITY IN RESPONSE TO THE INVITATION OF THE EC SUMMIT OF LAST OCTOBER WHICH CALLED FOR CONSULTATIONS WITH EC LABOR AND MANAGEMENT ON A NEW EC SOCIAL PROGRAM OF ACTION. HOWEVER, THE MEMBERS OF THE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE, MOST NOTABLY THE DGB, WERE DISSATISFIED WITH THE DRAFT PROGRAM PROPOSALS PRESENTED TO IT BY THE ETUC SECRETARIAT. A GROUP OF TOP LEVEL OFFICERS FROM ETUC LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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AFFILIATES IS EXPECTED TO MEET IN BRUSSELS ON MAY 14 TO DRAW UP NEW PROPOSALS FOR AN ETUC DRAFT POLICY PROGRAM IN TIME FOR THE NEXT MEETING OF THE EC COUNCIL OF SOCIAL MINISTERS MAY 21 AND AN EC CONFERENCE ON SOCIAL AFFAIRS SCHEDULED FOR JUNE 28 IN LUXEMBOURG. GREENWALD

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